

a moment of comfort by eddie_kaspbraks

Series: [stenbrough](#) | [stan x bill](#) [2]

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Canon Compliant, Cross-Posted on Tumblr, Fluff and Angst, Hurt/Comfort, M/M, bills just a lil bit emo and stan is v much there for him, maybe this is a lil shitty but hey im posting it anyways, miss me w/the s/o healing their partners problems bullshit this is pure love n support

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Summary:

Bill's got a bad habit of keeping his feelings to himself, but Stan is willing to stand alongside him while he gets his shit figured out. He's there, at midnight, in the Tozier's kitchen, because he loves Bill, and it is really as simple as that.

prompt: stenbrough + "i don't deserve to be loved"

a moment of comfort

When Stan found Bill sitting at the Tozier's kitchen table in the middle of the night, he knew something was wrong. He supposed he had known as soon as he had woken up and discovered Bill was no longer wrapped in his arms, but he'd wanted to think that maybe his boyfriend had just sneaked out to get some water or a late night snack (which wasn't exactly too uncommon for Bill Denbrough).

But here he was- Bill, sitting with his hands flat on the table, his gaze locked on some bland, undistinguished bit of wall. He didn't seem to notice Stan standing in the doorway.

Stan had found Bill like this on occasion before, mainly in the months following Pennywise. (Just *Pennywise*, as if *IT* were some sort of moment that one could pinpoint as a climactic event, even though the thing had gone on for several months.) Stan knew it normally meant Bill had been thinking about Georgie, but they were seventeen now, and Stan had had no idea it was still happening.

"Bill?" Stan whispered. He could hear the concern, its presence heavy in his voice, barely masking his astonishment. Bill had been doing a lot better. All of the Losers had agreed on that.

"Stan," Bill replied. His voice sounded flat, and for some reason, that made Stan nervous. Bill stretched his hands, turning his head to look at Stan. He smiled in what Stan suspected was an apologetic fashion, but it was hard to believe because Bill's eyes looked a little empty of emotion. "Hey."

Stan crossed over to the kitchen table and slid into the seat across from Bill. He reached out and placed a hand over Bill's, though Bill made no move to indicate he'd noticed the action. It wasn't really hand-holding of any sort, but at least Bill knew he had that option.

"It's late," Stan said finally. He glanced up in an attempt to meet Bill's gaze, but his boyfriend was staring down at their hands now. Stan thought (and hated that he knew he was probably right) that Bill was just trying to find an excuse not to look at him. Bill always had trouble looking at people when his emotions were on the line.

Stan waited. It felt like hours, but he knew Bill would speak when he was ready. And even though he knew Bill wouldn't answer if prompted, he asked, "Are you okay?"

One minute. Maybe two. Stan tried to focus on the sound of the clock's second hand, trying to match the counting in his head with the rhythmic *tick, tick, tick*. He wasn't really sure if he'd get a response at all.

Bill closed his eyes for a long moment. His chest rose a little too quickly for him to be breathing at a normal pace, and Stan subconsciously scooted his chair closer to the table. This situation had him on edge, because he wasn't exactly sure he had ever seen Bill like this before.

"I killed him, Stan," Bill whispered, his voice, flat. *Void*, Stan thought, and that seemed to fit the expression (or lack of) on Bill's face.

What? Stan wanted to gasp out, but the words wouldn't form in his mouth. He gripped Bill's hand a little tighter, looking up to study Bill's face. *I killed him. I killed him.* And, at least for the moment, Bill looked a bit like he'd stopped existing inside himself. His body was here, but the part of him that was actually *living* was nowhere to be found.

Stan bit his lip then took one more deep breath, even though he hadn't noticed his slightly labored breathing. He prepared to respond, but Bill beat him to it.

"Damn it, Stan, I huh-held the guh-hun to his head, and I pulled the truh-tr-trigger!" Bill's voice was a whisper, but his tone was high pitched and strained. The world was hushed, but that whisper— that whisper sounded like a yell ripping the night's silence right in half.

When Bill met Stan's gaze, Stan at first thought his eyes looked darker than normal, duller. There was a look of anguish tarnished across Bill's features, and Stan didn't know how to help him. Stan knew those very words must have been caged inside him for a long time now, and goddamn it, Stan *didn't know how to help him*.

"Bill! That- that wasn't Georgie," Stan whispered urgently. He had to

close his eyes to remember just exactly how the events went down. The sewers... That- that clown. It all seemed so far away now. He thought often of how those events changed him, but the actual events- how it all happened- that, he'd locked in a small corner of his mind, tucked deep in a chest as one might find in their grandparents' attic. He couldn't change his feelings or emotions, but those memories were supposed to be the one thing he'd never have to experience again.

Bill laughed, and the sound was so hollow, it set Stan on edge. Then Bill snorted a little, and it was like he thought that was funny too—his own boyfriend, scared of him. Something inside of Stan broke a little at that, and he squeezed Bill's hand one more time.

"I didn't know, Stan," Bill choked out. "I held the gun to his head—Uh-I looked him ruh-high in the eye, and thuh-then I pulled the trigger, and I still had no idea. My own *brother*. I puh-pulled the trigger, simple as that."

Stan remembered that. He remembered Mike holding him nearly halfway on his feet as the two of them stumbled through the sewers and came to a halt at the sight of Georgie. And Bill. Stan hadn't seen Bill's face, but he could hear the emotions in his voice. His first thought- his first thought had been that Richie had been wrong after all, that Georgie really had somehow managed to survive in the sewers all those months.

How long must Bill have tortured himself with that memory to convince himself of his own guilt? Stan wondered. Bill had seen Pennywise convulse and contort the body of his brother, same as the others had. That thing Bill had shot had been no Georgie.

Stan rubbed Bill's hand gently with his thumb, but Bill withdrew it a moment later. As Stan tried in vain to find words to say, Bill extended his thumb, middle, and pointer finger in the shape of a gun, then held his hand up to Stan's forehead. He mimicked the shooting motion.

All words crumbled apart in Stan's mind.

"Simple as that," Bill repeated.

“Bill-”

“I cuh-can’t get it out of my head, Stan,” Bill said, and the cold edge in his voice finally succumbed into a quiet, scared tone. Stan watched Bill’s lip quiver, and then tears finally started to slip down his boyfriend’s cheeks. It came on suddenly, like a wave, and Bill surfaced from it sputtering and struggling for breath.

“Bill, that wasn’t *him* .”

“Whuh-what if it was?” Bill asked. Desperation weighed heavily in his voice, his grip on Stan’s hand tightened, and Stan thought it was the only thing keeping Bill *here* , as if he had become Bill’s lifeline, the only thing keeping him afloat (because apparently, in this scenario, floating was the closest thing to being really, truly alive). “I duh-didn’t know any buh-better. I cuh-coulda killed any wuh-one of you in there.”

“But you didn’t,” Stan interrupted. His voice shook, but he didn’t sound any less sure of himself. “You didn’t shoot any of us, and you didn’t kill Georgie either.”

“I muh-might’ve well as,” Bill said. “My puh-p-parents bluh-blame me f-for it.” He grew quiet for a moment, his gaze falling on the space of table Stan hadn’t moved his hands from.

“I duh-don’t think they l-luh-love me anymuh-more,” Bill said, his voice so hushed, Stan thought Bill was no longer even talking directly to him. “Uh-I mean, I duh-don’t desuh-serve to be loved anywuh-anyway.”

“Yuh-you don’t- Bill-” Stan sputtered in shock. He reached out and took Bill’s hands again, even though he felt Bill tense up for a moment. He tried to gather his thoughts together, then cleared his throat.

“I can’t say what your parents feel, Bill, but they’re wrong- and so are you. You might not feel loved or like you deserve it, but goddamn it, Bill, I *love* you.”

His voice cracked. They’re not words he hadn’t told Bill before. The

words were as used and worn and comfortable as a much-adored book, but more importantly, those words were laden with meaning. It wasn't as eloquent a phrase as he'd liked to have spun, but the point was this:

I am here. For whatever you need. My love does not cancel out the wrongs you have faced, and it does not heal the hurt inflicted upon you. I love you means this: a steady foundation, a place to stand, a shore to shipwreck upon. I am not the moving on or the getting up. But I am the place where you manage those things for yourself.

Bill looked up, an expression caught somewhere between shock and hope suspended on his features. "Yuh-you love me?"

Stan gasped. "Of course, I do!"

Stan could feel tears slipping down his cheeks, and he thought the feeling in his chest must be his heart missing a few beats. It wasn't a thought he believed, but the idea that he'd somehow failed to get his feelings across slipped into his mind.

Then Stan heard Bill's breath stumble out of his mouth in a way that was quite possibly the only way one ever managed lightheartedness in the midst of tears, and he knew Bill understood. He might need a confirmation from time to time, but love was a concept that, despite all odds, Bill had somehow gained the grips upon.

Stan pushed his chair back abruptly, the legs screeching against the linoleum floor, and quickly crossed to the other side of the table. He placed his left hand on Bill's shoulder, and when his boyfriend lifted his head to meet Stan's gaze, Stan brought his right hand to Bill's cheek.

Bill's eyes were full of tears; Stan could feel that his were too. And somewhere a little deeper than that, Bill's eyes were lighted. Not quite shining, but illuminated- a spark in the darkness. The emotion was buried deep, but Bill was *happy*.

"Come here, Bill," Stan said, his voice shaking as much as Bill's stuttered.

Bill stood, and Stan pulled Bill to his chest. Bill's head fell neatly onto his shoulder, as if it was tailored just for him, and even though his tears caused Stan's undershirt to stick uncomfortably to his neck, he took no movement to change it.

It doesn't fix anything, Stan thought forlornly, after they'd stood there long enough for Bill's sobs to quiet down into whisper-like tears. Stan rubbed up and down his back, and he could swear once or twice that Bill was shaking, more than just from the gasping for breath and choked back sobs.

I can't fix this for him, but I can be here while he learns to do it himself.

A snuffle. Silence. Then-

"I luh-love yuh-y-you too, Stuh-hanley."

Author's Note:

previously posted on tumblr at richie-kaspbraks